

ESSEX COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Section	Submitted By	Date
HOMICIDE	WILLIAM O'CONNELL COUNTY INVESTIGATOR	2/10/89

TO: CHIEF LOUIS E. GREENLEAF
RE: MEMORANDUM OF PROSECUTOR TATE THIS DATE
SIR: ATTACHED PLEASE FIND INFORMATION REQUESTED BY PROSECUTOR TATE

1 Date: 1-30-88, 12:37 a.m., Newark.
Decedent is Wilberto Bonilla, age 27, decedent was operating a stolen vehicle west on South Street, when he reached the intersection of South Street and McCarter Highway he disregarded a red traffic signal and as a result was struck by second vehicle which was traveling northbound on McCarter Highway. Decedent's blood alcohol at the time of accident was .201%. No police chase involved.

2. Date: 5-9-88, 7:27 p.m., Newark.
Decedent, Damon Johnson, age 19, was a passenger in a stolen vehicle which was being operated by juvenile defendant Benjamin Josey, age 17. Vehicle was being operated at a high rate of speed on Lehigh Avenue, Newark, when Josey apparently attempted to make an evasive manuver when he struck a parked vehicle killing the passenger. No police chase involved.

Defendant pled guilty to death by auto and receiving stolen proper on 6-28-88 in family court.

3. Date: 6-4-88, 7:48 p.m., Newark.
Decedent Julia Woods, age 55, was traveling southbound on University Avenue entering the intersection of University Avenue and Raymond Blvd., when she was struck by a stolen vehicle which was being operated by defendant Joseph Rodriquez, age 16. The stolen auto had been taken by the above defendant and two (2) other juveniles from a shopping center in Jersey City just minutes before the accident.

This incident involved a police chase involving the Jersey City Police Department who initiated the chase in Jersey City after observing the defendant negotiated an illegal turn at an intersection in Jersey City.

Supervisor Approval

Prosecuting Attorney

In addition to the above vehicle there was a second stolen vehicle and two occupants apprehended by Jersey City Police in Jersey City which was directly involved with the theft of the vehicle involved in this fatality.

On February 3, 1989, this matter was waived from juvenile court to Superior Court with regard to defendant Joseph Rodriguez charging him with 1) felony murder, 2) burglary, 3) receiving stolen property.

4. Date: 6-27-88, 3:16 a.m., West Orange
Decedent Jeffrey Tarver, age 24, was operating a stolen vehicle in Roseland accompanied by two other male subjects. Police investigators revealed that they were in the area either to steal car parts or other cars. While walking in a residential area of Roseland they were observed by area residents. Police were notified and responded. The Tarver subject became aware that the police were in the area and fled accompanied by a second individual identified as Shaid Giles, age 20.

While fleeing they are traveling eastbound on Eaglerock Avenue in the stolen auto the Tarver subject apparently lost control of his vehicle and struck a tree.

Initial reports indicated the possibility of a police chase but we have been unable to substantiate this report. Reports have been submitted by Roseland Police and Essex Fells Police as to their actions during this incident.
5. Date 7-15-88, 6:00 a.m., East Orange.
Decedent, Lauce Shelton, age 20, was a pedestrian/motorist who had become disabled on I-280 westbound in East Orange. In an attempt to flag down a passing tow truck Shelton was struck by defendant Calvin Shinholster, age 21, who was operating a stolen vehicle in excess of 85 mph. No police chase involved.
6. Date: 7-26-88, 6:05 p.m., Newark.
Decedent, Rabeejah Green, age 7, was exiting her house at 14 E. Alphine Street and stood next to a brick wall. She was at the above location when a stolen auto being operated by her mother, Temeria Green, age 23, struck the wall causing the bricks to fall on the decedent killing her. Temeria Green had just gotten into the auto and was apparently attempting to learn how to drive when she lost control of the car and struck the wall. No police chase involved.
7. Date: 8-5-88, 12:40 a.m., Newark.
Decedent, Lawrence Dent, age 17, was operating a motorcycle northbound on 14th Street, approaching Avon Avenue when he entered the intersection he was struck by defendant Nathaniel Burrows, age 21, who was operating a stolen auto eastbound on Avon Avenue. Defendant Burrow disregarded a red traffic signal at this location. No police chase involved.

8. Decedent, Tawan Martin, age 16, was a passenger in a stolen auto being operated by defendant Phil Phillips, age 16. Defendant operated the vehicle through a red traffic signal at the intersection of 14th Avenue and Bergen Street where he struck a vehicle which was traveling northbound on Bergen Street. Vehicle operated by defendant then continued eastbound on 14th Avenue where it struck a utility pole trapping the decedent in the auto. The Martin youth expired at University Hospital later that evening.

Reports indicate that several police had chased this auto earlier on in the evening but were definitely not chasing it at the time of the accident.

9. Decedent, Joseph Copeland, Jr., age 21, was struck by a stolen auto being operated by defendant, Mark Tolbert, age 14, on Central Avenue, between So. 7th Street and So. 8th Street.

Circumstances surrounding this incident indicate that the pedestrian was struck while the defendant was attempting to elude the County Police, unaware that the police chase had been terminated.

In reviewing police reports it has been established that the County Police chase of this vehicle had been terminated while the County Police were still on Norfolk Street. It has been further established that Mr. Copeland was struck approximately 35 hundred feet west of Norfolk and Central Avenue while attempting to cross Central Avenue.

It has also been established that a second chase occurred upon the County Police Officers observed Mr. Copeland struck by the questioned vehicle. This chase ultimately was terminated in the area of So. 18th Street and Central Avenue when the stolen auto became involved in a second accident.

In addition to the previously listed nine incidents, on October 23, 1988, in the City of Newark, at 4:30 p.m., a Ms. Kathleen Spellman, age 39, was involved in a fatal accident which resulted in the death of one Mildred Gorham, age 41. The circumstances surrounding this fatality involved Ms. Spellman while attempting to recover her stolen automobile disregarded a stop sign at the intersection of Shanley Avenue and Avon Avenue, where she struck a second vehicle in which Ms. Gorham was a passenger. It should be noted that the vehicle Ms. Spellman was chasing also disregarded the stop sign but was able to avoid a collision.

On January 20, 1989, Ms. Spellman was indicted by an Essex County Grand Jury for causing a death by auto.

Respectfully submitted,


WILLIAM B. O'CONNELL
COUNTY INVESTIGATOR